

INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
DECEMBER 13, 2006 - 7:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Agency: Scott, Sutphen, Williams (7:40), Keeler, and Block
Alternates Ashworth and Furlong
Staff: Jones, Discordia

Chairman Scott appointed Ashworth as a voting member.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Marine Science Magnet School, 155 Thomas Road

Chairman Scott opened the hearing at 7:30 pm.

Block read the legal ad as it appeared in The Day.

Staff confirmed that the mailings are in order.

Greg Smolley of JCJ Architecture handed out presentation materials to the Agency. He discussed the Magnet School's curriculum. This is an ideal location between fresh and salt water. The Birch Plain Creek salt water estuary is on the west side and Sparkle Lake, which is fresh water, is on the southeast side of the school.

Dean Gustafson, of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., a soil and wetland scientist in Middletown, Connecticut presented to the Agency. Sparkle Lake is about 8 feet deep and is man made. It has a relatively young forested edge. There is some shallow aquatic vegetation. He described a finger of wetland that is manmade and has minimal wetland value. This finger is the area they are proposing to fill, approximately 2,500 square feet. Mr. Gustafson stated it would not have significant impact to Sparkle Lake if filled.

Mr. Gustafson described the other wetland resources on the site. He reviewed a small wetland area of 1,600 square feet. It does have some wetland characteristics but it has been disturbed. It contains a mix of both wetland and upland species. The hydrology has been altered as it has been filled and therefore doesn't provide much wetland value.

There is an isolated freshwater wetland further north on the site that has been heavily altered and disturbed. At least 2/3 of the wetland has been filled with debris and rubbish. Although it was mostly filled, it was only a foot deep and therefore still has wetland soils and is classified as a wetland area. He stated that this wetland could be rehabilitated and restored to provide some wildlife function.

The remaining resources on the property are tidal and they are working with DEP to obtain the appropriate permits.

Evan Coles, landscape architect from Simsbury, Connecticut presented to the Agency. The entry road to the school will be off Thomas Road. A bike path is planned along Thomas Road and the school will construct a wide walk along the driveway to connect into the bike path. He described the first driveway loop as a parent/student drop off and the loop closer to the school would be the bus drop off. This whole site is in the flood plain, therefore they needed to raise the building out of the 500 year flood level. Parking will be on the bottom level and the school would be essentially on the second floor and out of the 100 year flood plain. There is emergency access along the front and back of the school. Mr. Coles stated that they just received comments from the fire chief to move the back emergency access road 10 feet back from the school so they could get a fire ladder to the roof of the school.

There will be a dock area off of "Water Street", a concrete plaza area runs along the front of the school. He discussed the access to Sparkle Lake and the salt water estuary. Mr. Coles explained how they came to design the site.

Dean Ober from JCJ Architecture stated the proposed building will be 50,000 square feet and three-stories. There is parking under a portion of it. They are trying to keep the aqua tanks as close to ground level as possible so the building is a split level building. Thirty parking spaces including handicap spaces are under the building. Dean went over the site concepts for designing the building and the floor plans. He stated that there will be a screen wall to prevent viewing of the parked cars under the school. Dean showed that most of the school would face over Sparkle Lake and the two-floor media center would view the salt water estuary. He showed different views of the proposed school.

Patrick Doherty, Manager of Land Development Services and professional engineer from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. in Middletown, Connecticut reviewed the staff comments they have received thus far. He discussed how they kept the design of the school and driveway as tight and linear to minimize any impact to the wetlands. All utilities will be public and will be aligned to the site along the driveway to the south side of the building. They are planning to bring one pole into the site and then have the electric run underground to the site. Mr. Dougherty stated they are still working on the design with the electric company. The water company requested an 8 inch water main to the site instead of the originally proposed 6 inch.

The school will use biofiltration to filter stormwater. There will be sheet flow into rain gardens as much as possible. The stormwater system has been designed to capture and treat the rainwater. They did use catch basins on the closest driveway loop near the school. This is the only place they needed to use catch basins. Mr. Dougherty explained that the bike path system would not need any grading. They are going to design it to go around the trees.

Mr. Dougherty stated they were asked how they were going to protect the site from invasive species. They will treat all the areas with either a seed mixture or a landscape treatment. He stated the landscape architect has provided a planting program.

Mr. Dougherty stated they would like to open the area in front of Sparkle Lake to give a view of the school from Thomas Road. He stated they would not clear cut but would remove smaller vegetation.

Williams asked about the small finger of wetlands and the different configurations on two of the maps. Mr. Smolley stated the second map was the accurate wetland map.

Furlong asked if this building would be on pylons. Mr. Smolley stated a portion of the building would be supported by concrete columns. There would not be a need for any excavating just dewatering to pour the columns.

Furlong asked about a storm water detention area. She was concerned about the runoff from the roof going into this detention area. She was concerned about the groundwater filling a portion of the basin and reducing its volume. Mr. Smolley stated that the detention basin would be adequate and they are planning a green roof which would absorb some of the rainwater. Mr. Smolley stated they have done a dozen borings on the site and the bearing capacities of the soils are ideal for this site allowing them to use a simpler foundation system.

Block asked the fluctuation of the level of Sparkle Lake. Mr. Smolley stated that it stays pretty constant. She asked about the plan for the vegetation along the lake. Mr. Smolley stated that it would remain undisturbed. Mr. Smolley stated they have to review the landscape plan with the planning staff. The walkway coming on the site would be a natural walk. Mr. Smolley stated that the design is to encourage pedestrians to come on to the site and enjoy it.

Sutphen asked what the State listed as endangered species on the site. Staff reported that there are two historic records of state listed species on the site. The golden rod stem borer, a moth, was found not to be on the site. *Hudsonia tomentosa*, an herbaceous plant, was found and its location is shown on the plan.

Williams asked if they are going to fill in the finger wetland how would that be mitigated. Mr. Smolley stated that as the site walk proved that there is a lot of garbage in one of the wetland pockets that will be cleaned up. He also noted that the school curriculum that is focused on raising the environmental awareness.

Staff read the referrals from the Planning and Conservation Commissions. Staff read a letter into the record from Syma A. Ebbin. She stated that they just received the revised plans and are waiting for comments.

Chairman Scott asked if there were any public comments.

Phil Tuthill is a neighbor of this site. Mr. Tuthill stated that he approves of this application.

Doris Pulaski is a trustee of the property being sold and is in favor of this application.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for the Marine Science Magnet School, 155 Thomas Road until January 10, 2007.

Motion made by Sutphen, and seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF November 8, 2006 and November 16, 2006

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 8, 2006 and November 16, 2006 as amended.

Block stated that for the minutes of November 8, 2006, page 4, under item 3., change "isn't" to "is" a systematic herbicide.

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Keeler, so voted unanimously.

V. NEW APPLICATIONS

1. Receipt of New Applications

- Mystic Business Park, 800 Flanders Road

Staff stated that the property is located on Flanders Road north of I-95. The Town of Groton landfill is on the opposite side of the street from this site. Ken Petrini of DiCesare Bentley Engineers presented to the Agency. Mr. Petrini stated that the site total area is about 7.38 acres. There are three steel buildings on the site. They are proposing 4 additional steel buildings and there will also be wells as there is no public water available. The activities are in upland review areas only. There are two existing drainage systems. They are proposing construction of a sidewalk, drainage system and onsite sewage disposal for warehouse/light manufacturing facility. The sewage system is 90 feet from the wetland.

Sutphen asked about the 15 inch pipe under Flanders Road and how that affects stormwater run off. Mr. Petrini stated that the road acts like a dam and holds back water which exits the wetland through the 15 inch pipe. Sutphen also requested that he bring a map of the wetlands in this watershed.

MOTION: To classify the Mystic Business Park, 800 Flanders Road as a minor application.

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously.

- Chesler Residence, 605 Fishtown Road

Staff stated this application is for the construction of a new single family residence and relocation of existing driveway and two sanitary sewer services. There will be site clearing and associated grading within the upland review area.

Furlong asked how far the construction would be from the wetlands and staff stated 40 feet. The Agency expressed concern regarding the proximity of the activity to the wetland.

- Groton Landing, 290 Gold Star Highway

Nuria Stockman of DiCesare Bentley Engineers stated this application is for a modification to IWA permit 06-12, construction of a 22 bay auto storage facility with underground electrical utilities and parking in the upland review area. A modification was requested by the Planning Commission that the access drive be widened to 18 feet. The lower portion of the drive will be in the upland review area. A sidewalk along Route 184 was also included in the request.

The widening will occur on the wetland side of the existing driveway. Ms. Stockman noted the slope and drainage structure on the other side that would have to be modified if the driveway were widened there.

The Agency agreed that they could not support additional activity closer to the wetlands and urged Ms. Stockman to explore regrading the slope to widen the driveway further from the wetlands.

VI. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. Marine Science Magnet School, 155 Thomas Road

The public hearing was continued until the next regularly scheduled meeting on January 10, 2007.

2. Pendleton Farm Lane Subdivision, 520 Flanders Road

Staff stated that the applicant wanted to go over the revised plans with the Agency. Bob Schuch presented to the Agency. Mr. Schuch stated they have moved all work out of the 100 foot wetland buffer zone. They've reduced the road width down to 20 feet from 22. They reduced the cul-de-sac diameter to 40 feet which will need a waiver from the

Planning Commission. Mr. Schuch submitted a wetland assessment by soil scientist, Bob Russo.

The Commission reviewed the location of the houses and septic system in relation to the 100 foot line. They expressed concern that home owners may gradually encroach on the regulated area. Staff noted that the area could be posted. Staff reported that revised plans had been submitted last week and she does not have comments back yet from public works or the fire marshal.

MOTION: To grant a 26 day extension and table the discussion to the January 10, 2006 meeting.

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Block, so voted unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. City of Groton Referral for 770, 772, 774 & 776 Shennecossett Road, Groton

The Agency reviewed the wetland application for a 12 lot subdivision and a new road off Shennecossett Road in the City of Groton. The application was referred to the Agency because it is within 500 feet of the town/city boundary.

The Agency agreed that the activity would have no impact on wetlands within the town. They urged the City Conservation Commission to secure a wide undisturbed area around the wetlands to allow the filtration of stormwater flowing from the new road and developed lots. The Agency also recommended careful review of any activity that could impact the wetlands and suggested that the plan be modified to minimize all direct and indirect impacts.

2. Report of Chair – None.
3. Report of Staff - None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Rhodes Property, 0 Winding Hollow Road

Don Fortunato of Soil & Environmental Services, Inc., reviewed a restoration plan for the Rhodes property on Winding Hollow Road. The Agency has taken enforcement action to stop activity in a wetland finger and upland review area and to require that the area be restored. Mr. Fortunato submitted an outline for the restoration, noting that the actual field conditions once the fill is removed will dictate the planting material used. The Agency told Mr. Fortunato and Mr. Rhodes to work with staff as the work is carried out. The work should be completed by June.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Scott